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STATEMENT

OF

GEN. S. L. GLASGOW

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AFFAIRS,

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

ON

H. R. 8989,

TO CREATE A SPECIAL ROLL, TO BE KNOWN AS  
THE "VOLUNTEER RETIRED LIST."

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## VOLUNTEER RETIRED LIST.

COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AFFAIRS,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
*Thursday, December 13, 1906.*

### STATEMENT OF GEN. S. L. GLASGOW IN THE ADVOCACY OF H. R. 8989 TO CREATE A SPECIAL ROLL TO BE KNOWN AS THE VOL- UNTEER RETIRED LIST.

General GLASGOW. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, you are no doubt acquainted with the provisions of the bill, as well as the merits of the services rendered by the proposed beneficiaries and the time of service, etc.

I wish to give some reasons why I think the bill should receive your favorable consideration.

There are at this time about 169 persons who would be eligible to go on the retired list under the provisions of the bill. The bill provides that they shall be 70 years of age and shall have served two and one-half years, and at least one year in the field with troops. To those having these qualifications the roll is to be created in the War Department, to be known as the volunteer retired list, and that applicants who shall so qualify shall receive three-fourths of active pay.

One objection which has been made, and one which I think is not entitled to much consideration, is the question of cost. We have submitted a statement of the cost for the first year for those eligible to go on the list and the amount was, one year ago, \$440,000. The bill was introduced into the House on the 18th of December last and referred to this committee.

All of these men are over 70 years of age, and most of them are 74, 76, 78, and up to 83, one being 90. In the natural course the first year's cost would be greater, but the mortality after the first year would be rapid.

Taking into consideration this comparative small amount, it seems to me that the matter of cost should not be an objection. We all admit, and I will make no sentiment about it, that the comrades of 1861 to 1865, when they risked their health, lives, and limbs made no question of cost, and now, forty-one years after the close of the civil war, the Government should not be particular about cost. This is a small item and the decrease would be rapid each year.

The applicants have read the report as to the pensions, and they find that this year there is a decrease of 20,000 pensioners by death.

The report of the commander of the Grand Army of the Republic shows that the decrease in the list of survivors of the Union Army is now about 7,000 per month. That decrease will naturally become greater from year to year. Taking into consideration the question of cost, it will probably all disappear, so far as this bill is concerned, in three or four years. I think that is all I need to say on the question of cost.

Now, there is another question which caused me more thought than the question of cost, and that is the question asked by your chairman and by certain members of the committee, why a line should be drawn at this particular rank and not include the junior grades. In justice and equity all grades should be included. If Congress will pass a bill at this time including all grades it would have no stronger advocates than the beneficiaries of this bill. If Congress does not see fit to do so at this time there could be no objection to the passage of this bill for the benefit of these men on account of their age, and let the others, as they attain the allotted age, have the benefit of the bill. Those over 70 should now have the benefits of the bill and later the others now under that age should have the benefit of it when they attain that age. None of us desire to draw a line of demarcation.

Mr. BRADLEY. What is that line of demarcation?

General GLASGOW. The grade included in this bill is that of brevet brigadier-general.

The CHAIRMAN. Major-generals and brevet brigadier-generals usually rank a colonel. These are cared for now. Why not include lieutenants, colonels, majors, captains, and first and second lieutenants?

General GLASGOW. The honorable chairman of this committee addressed me a letter as to this inquiry, and as your time is all taken up I wish to bring a few facts briefly to your attention, and I will ask your courtesy to read one paragraph in the letter addressed to Mr. Hull referring to this particular question. The whole letter treats of the subject, but I will read this one paragraph because it sums up the matter. This is a letter from me to Mr. Hull of date of February 16, 1906, in answer to a request made by him to know why the bill apparently discriminated against the junior grades of volunteer officers. The paragraph is as follows:

There is and should be no objection among comrades to the principle of this bill. All grades are entitled to recognition. The question is one merely of expediency. If Congress at this time will pass a bill including all grades no one would give the same more hearty approval than the beneficiaries of this bill. If, however, such a bill would not be entertained at this time, there can be no valid objection to the enactment of this bill, within the limits defined, for the reason that most of the beneficiaries of this bill are more than 70 years of age, the average age being 74. Those who have not attained the age of 70 years would not receive the benefits of the bill until they shall arrive at that age. The officers of junior grades are as an average from seven to ten years younger than the average age of the beneficiaries of the bill in question. The beneficiaries of the bill in question who have passed the age of 70 years should have the benefit of the bill without delay. And, further, the enactment of this bill would establish a precedent that would render easy future legislation for the benefit of all grades at or prior to the time that the beneficiaries would arrive at the allotted age. There is no question as to the equitable principle that all officers should be included in the retired list. The means to arrive at that end in the most speedy manner possible are now to be considered. If it should be impossible to enact a bill at this time including all grades and the proposed bill should be defeated for the reason that it does

not include all grades, no one will receive any benefit, no legislation in that respect accomplished, and the result will be no recognition by Congress of the service given.

This is the position that the proposed beneficiaries of this bill take in regard to that. The whole matter rests with Congress. This bill in no way exhausts the subject, but leaves open the question of the recognition of junior grades; but the beneficiaries whose ages are from 7 to 90 respectfully ask recognition now.

Mr. HOLLIDAY. Can you tell what pay this will give to a major or a brigadier-general?

Mr. HAY. That is fixed by law.

The CHAIRMAN. It is three-fourths of the active pay. I think one great difficulty in the mind of Congress will be the question why, after these men have been in civil life for over forty years, this money should be given to them amounting to three-fourths pay of the grade of their army service. The obligations of the Government ceased when they were mustered out, except for pensions for disability.

General GLASGOW. I think the best answer to that question which I have heard or read was given by Daniel Webster in advocating the bill of 1828, in which bill Congress granted similar recognition to that now asked to the officers of the Revolutionary Army about forty-two years after the close of the Revolutionary war. He said in one of his great periods, it was "a mixed claim of faith and public gratitude, of merit and benevolence, of justice and honorable bounty." The foregoing are excellent reasons for asking this recognition. The services were rendered, they were meritorious, and the Government needed the services at the time. The recognition asked for is a mixed claim of faith and public gratitude, of justice and honorable bounty, of merit and benevolence.

Mr. KAHN. The bill you refer to provided a reward for all surviving officers?

General GLASGOW. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. It did not go by grades, but gave so much, not to exceed the pay of a captain.

General GLASGOW. Not full pay, but the pay of no officer to exceed that of a captain.

This bill would be an act of recognition worthy of this Congress and would render possibly more easy the few declining years left to these men. It would be an act of faith, public gratitude, reward of merit, and benevolence. The question of cost should not be considered as any objection.

Mr. KAHN. Have you any idea how many officers between the grades of junior and brigadier there are?

General GLASGOW. I can give something like an estimate, but it would only be a guess. I was first asked that question in a conversation with my genial friend Colonel Parker, and I have thought something about it. The enlistment during the civil war was close to two million and some three hundred thousand. That would be about 2,000 regiments. There would be three line officers to each regiment, making 60,000.

The CHAIRMAN. Three field officers?

General GLASGOW. That would make it 66,000, and taking the ratio of decrease as applied to the rank and file, there would not be more

than 10 per cent of all those officers alive to-day; something like 6,000.

Mr. PARKER. What do you do with captains and lieutenants?

General GLASGOW. They are all in there. Thirty-three officers to a regiment, including field officers, if you take 2,000 to a regiment. The enlistment during the war was 2,300,000, including gray-beard regiments and ninety-day men. There were quite a number of those. It would be less than 2,000 regiments at 33 officers to a regiment.

During the last year of the war companies were reduced in numbers; vacancies in field and company officers were not filled. There were then not more than 20 officers to a regiment. The number surviving would be 4,000.

Mr. HOLLIDAY. Can you give any satisfactory reason why these gentlemen should be pensioned while the private soldier, who rendered as faithful and efficient service and made as many sacrifices, only gets \$12 a month?

General GLASGOW. I could not except on the supposition that it has been customary to pay officers more than privates. A regiment of privates would not be worth much without a commander, and a commander could not do much without a command. The two go together. While the private soldier was paid \$13 a month during the war, the captain and the lieutenant were paid \$108 and \$110. They had to furnish their own clothes and supplies. It has been a question whether the pay of those officers was more than the pay of a private.

Mr. YOUNG. The duties were more important.

General GLASGOW. Yes; the duties were more important and responsibilities greater. It required a higher order of responsibility to direct the forces of the Army, and it costs more in every way. Each one is entitled to merit, and the existing state of affairs then and now is responsible for the different grade and pay.

There has not been in the laws of the United States since the civil war such a thing known as the grade or rank of general, brevet brigadier, or major. Since the civil war you can not find it anywhere in the law. That grade is not recognized. That is the only grade of service which has not been recognized. If a lieutenant or captain be pensioned he is given the next grade above. Under this law we would get \$12 a month. We are classed under the title known as "otherwise." That law reads: "Any person having served as a soldier or otherwise \$12 a month, after 70 years of age." The question, I think is, Why should these men who commanded armies, corps, divisions, and brigades be relegated to \$12 a month after they have rendered this service, considering the merit of the service rendered, and the great responsibility incident thereto.

By the act of August 5, 1892, women employed in the hospitals as nurses who served six months are entitled to \$12 a month. It puts them in the same rank.

The CHAIRMAN. If a brevet brigadier be disabled would he not be pensionable at the same rate as a colonel?

General GLASGOW. He would be pensioned probably as a lieutenant-colonel or major. The name brevet brigadier or brevet major-general, brigadier, or major-general does not appear in the acts of Congress anywhere since the civil war. That question rests with

Congress. There are a number of bills in reference to age and service of survivors of the Union Army, and we suggest to Congress that we be given this recognition and three-fourths of active pay.

We have nothing to conceal from this committee. There are on file amendments to this bill providing that at the age of 65 the officer shall have one-fourth pay; at 70, one-half pay, and at 75, three-fourths pay. This bill gives three-fourths retired pay to those aged 70. There are amendments on file making various changes. All these things are before you gentlemen to decide.

I want to call attention to the apparent discrimination between the officers of the Regular Army and the volunteer officers. At the commencement of the civil war the Union Army consisted of regulars and volunteers. The Government needed the services of each and each were of equal merit. The services of each were meritorious. Now, as a matter of fact, there should have been equality of treatment and recognition by the Government. Instead of that the Government has given recognition time and time again to officers of the Regular Army who served in the volunteer army, but no provision has been made up to this time, forty-two years after the close of the war, for volunteer officers.

Mr. BRADLEY. Is it not a fact that these men went on and served many years afterwards?

General GLASGOW. No; every recognition given by Congress to an officer of the Regular Army since the civil war was because he served in that war, and not because he served in the Regular Army. The reason is because he served in the civil war. Commencing in 1866, Congress passed an act providing that officers of the Regular Army who held commissions in the volunteer army could be retired on their volunteer rank. A captain in the Regular Army holding the rank of brigadier or major-general in the volunteer army and wounded or otherwise disabled could be retired on his rank of brigadier or major-general of volunteers instead of captain in the Regular Army. A volunteer officer so disabled is relegated to a small pension. That was increased by act of 1875. Then comes the act of 1891 and then the act of two years ago, April 23, 1904, wherein all officers of the Regular Army below brigadier-generals who served in the civil war were retired, and if already retired re-retired one grade above their actual rank. Some officers favored by that bill had been on the retired list thirty years. All officers who were on the official list, who held commissions in the Regular Army, were retired one grade above their actual rank on account of age for the reason that they served in the civil war. Did not the volunteer officer serve in the civil war? Is not he entitled to be retired for the same reason?

For the past forty years the policy of the Government has been to retire officers of the Regular Army for service in the Volunteer Army or in the civil war. It has not retired the Regular Army officer as such, but has retired him because he served during the civil war.

I will read a short section from the act of April 23, 1904—

that any officer below the grade of brigadier-general who served with credit as an officer or enlisted man in the regular or volunteer forces of the United States during the civil war, prior to April 9, 1865, and whose name is borne on the official register of the Army, and who has been or may be hereafter retired for wounds or disability incident to the service, on account of age or after forty years' service, may be placed on the list and retired with rank one grade above his regular rank.

Service in the civil war is the only reason for this recognition. We do not object to it, but we ask the same recognition under this bill for those 70 years of age and over. These men who apply for this recognition are eligible under every provision of this act except they do not hold commissions in the Regular Army. They are eligible on account of service; they are eligible on account of age. Most of them have reached the age of retirement for more than eight years and some more than eighteen years. There is no provision now forty-one years after the close of the civil war for a volunteer officer. Is there any reason why we should not have it? It amounts to honorable recognition, and the list will disappear in a very few years and will decrease more and more each year. Our information is that eighteen of those eligible have died since the introduction of this bill, December 18, 1905.

There is a bill now pending to increase the pay of all officers from lieutenant-general down. Those who are now paid \$100 would be paid \$120. That is right. That applies to the question of cost. Why object to the question of cost in this little matter of \$400,000 when it is proper, just, and equitable?

The act of April 23, 1904, advanced the grade for retirement. Lieutenant-colonels were advanced to colonels, and colonels were advanced to brigadier-generals. This difference in retired pay is \$1,125 a year. The expense of that is \$198,000 a year, and within the two years last past it is \$400,000.

It seems to me that, if I have made these reasons plain to you, you can not object to the equity and justice of the bill.

As to the question of cost, I think that is immaterial and Congress should not consider it at all.

The act of April 23, 1904, above referred to, gives recognition to officers of the Regular Army thirty-nine years after the close of the war, and now we ask it forty-one years after the close of the war.

In 1905 Congress retired Generals Hawley and Osterhaus, volunteer officers. We ask similar recognition and the benefit of this precedent.

Now, something a little more personal with reference to this. We respectfully ask this committee to report this bill favorably to the House; we wish a day in the House and wish to be heard at this session. We can neither have a day nor can we be heard in the House unless the bill be first reported by this committee.

We wish Congress to pass upon the measure. We respectfully request the advantage of a favorable report from this committee. In the House we can take our chance of a day to be heard. If Congress, when the matter is placed before it, should decide that we are not entitled to any recognition, that would be the end of it, and we will have to accept its decision. Give us a chance, and, as the boys used to say, "If we die, let us die in the open field." That is not asking very much, and I am satisfied you will report the bill favorably and give us an opportunity to be heard.

I thank you for the courtesy of this hearing.

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